



Not Another Jesus Book

by
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In comparison to God's words, what are men's worth?

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Not Another Jesus Book

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World English Bible

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**Dedicated to all
who are willing to challenge their beliefs
in order to find truth.**

“God never discourages a seeker
by judging his or her beliefs to be wrong.
Rather, God allows each person to recognize
spiritual error or truth by degrees.”

Sadhu Sunder Singh

Introduction

If you are looking for a book that will teach you about Jesus, don't look here. But if you are willing to spend some time with God, letting Him share things about His Son, perhaps you might be interested in reading on.

We're living in the world. The information that we absorb into our thinking is processed through the world—possibly in ways that we cannot see or understand.

Even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled in those who perish; in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

I could write a book about Jesus, but it would be tainted by my upbringing, experiences, and things that I've heard taught and read. My goal in putting together this book is to bring together words of God from the Bible about Jesus that can be a starting point for letting God speak to you personally about His Son. I've tried to limit my words to those that seem necessary for introduction, but even in choosing words and verses there is a worldly influence. So don't stop with what's written here. Let God guide you to scriptures in your Bible that might challenge my thoughts and your thinking.

In this internet age where everyone presents their own brand of truth, there is still one sure truth. Jesus prayed to his Father, "Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Spend some time with God. Come to Him with a seeking heart and a humble spirit. Take time to reflect on what He says. God will be pleased to tell you about His Son, Jesus, and all that He has for you through him.

But as it is written, "Things which an eye didn't see, and an ear didn't hear, which didn't enter into the heart of man, these God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9, quoting from Isaiah 64:4)

Contents

1. Who Is Jesus?	1
2. What's in a Name?	3
3. In the Beginning	7
4. The Image of God	11
5. The Fullness of God	15
6. What's in a Word?	17
7. Son of God	19
8. Son of Man	23
9. Jesus' Relationship with His Father	27
10. Jesus' Relationship with His Family	31
11. Jesus' Relationship with People	37
12. The Promised One	43
13. The Sent One	47
14. Last Names	51
15. Father, Son, Holy Spirit	55
16. Going Away	61
17. Coming Again	63
18. Witnesses of Jesus	67
19. Final Thoughts	71
20. Bible Verse Page Index	75

1. Who Is Jesus?

“Jesus” is used as a curse word by some, while being seen as a superstar by others. But who is Jesus? Can anyone ever know for sure? Can we make him anything that we want him to be?

Jesus was seen by most in his day as an ordinary man. He didn’t walk around with a halo around his head or glowing in a way that would set him apart from any other man. He was known as “the carpenter’s son” (Mathew 13:55) and also as a carpenter himself (Mark 6:3). People saw Jesus as a good man—and why not? The Bible says that he “did not sin, ‘neither was deceit found in his mouth’” (1 Peter 2:22, quoting from Isaiah 53:9). This must have been noteworthy in his character. The Bible records many of the good things—even miraculous things—that he did for people while he was here in this world.

Most people today are at least willing to acknowledge that the historical Jesus was a good person, even as Mother Teresa might be seen as such. Others go beyond Jesus’ human goodness to acknowledge that he was also a prophet from God. Still others believe that Jesus is God Himself.

Jesus was a Jew, living in a Jewish nation that was looking for a promised Messiah. Many believed that this coming one would free them from the bondage of Roman rule which they were under. God’s Word prophesied that one would come in the line of King David to reestablish the Jewish kingdom (see Ezekiel 37:24-28). Some were sure that Jesus was he.

But even as Jesus walked among men, there was disagreement about who he was.

Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” They said, “Some say John the Baptizer, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:13-17)

Does it still take personal revelation from God to understand who Jesus is?

We all have our own ideas about Jesus, but perhaps if we look at what is written of him in the Bible, God will use His Word to open a new understanding of Jesus—and maybe even teach us something about ourselves.

It is God who said, “Light will shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Why should we trust the Bible?

If you look in the Bible, you'll see that it's divided into what are called the Old and New Testaments. These contain the old and new covenants instituted by God. The "old" covenant was given through Moses to the Jewish nation (Exodus 19:3-8). It provided a means for relating to God by keeping commandments of the Law, while offering animal sacrifices for sins through a priest. God's new covenant of grace was introduced through the sacrificial death of Jesus for the sins of the world (Hebrews 9:11-15). It provides the way for all nations to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus (Ephesians 2:11-18).

For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

The Old Testament (old covenant) Law and sacrifices are physical pictures of the spiritual realities which Jesus fulfilled in God's new covenant. Our inability to keep the commandments of the Law helps us to see our need of God's provision for our salvation—freely given by His grace—through faith in the death of Jesus for our sins.

The law has become our tutor to bring us to Christ . . . (Galatians 3:24)

The truth of the Bible is seen in the fulfillment of the God-given prophecies which it contains. Included among these are the many Old Testament prophecies that have been fulfilled in the New Testament life of Jesus. Others are yet to be fulfilled in prophesied end time events—some of which are unfolding even now.

We have the more sure word of prophecy; and you do well that you heed it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star arises in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

2. What's in a Name?

“You shall call his name Jesus,
for it is he who shall save his people from their sins.”
(Matthew 1:21)

Did God have a name before Moses asked Him? Perhaps no one ever thought to ask, or felt the need to ask. After all, God is God. But in a world that is following after many different gods, how can we know that we're both talking about the one true God?

So Moses had a problem. God told him to go tell Pharaoh to free the Israelites² who served as slaves in his Egyptian kingdom. Why would Pharaoh be willing to free them? How would he convince the Israelites that God had sent him?

Moses had lived in the wilderness outside of Egypt for 40 years (Acts 7:29-30). Who would even remember him? How would he show them that God had given him authority to lead them to freedom?

Moses said to God, “Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you’; and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ What should I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM,” and he said, “You shall tell the children of Israel this: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God said moreover to Moses, “You shall tell the children of Israel this, ‘Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations.” (Exodus 3:13-15)

The name given by God in the original Hebrew is written in English as YHWH, from which Yahweh or Jehovah are derived. The Israelites (later called Jews) who put together the writings of the Old Testament scriptures considered the name of God to be so holy as to not even be worthy to say or write it. The Jewish scribes therefore replaced it instead with *Adonai*, “Sovereign Lord”. Most English Bible translations today have followed this tradition, replacing God's name with “the LORD.” Capital letters are used to distinguish it from the normal word “lord.”

God spoke to Moses, and said to him, “I am Yahweh; and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [*El Shaddai*]; but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them.” (Exodus 6:2-3)

“I am Yahweh. That is my name. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to engraved images.” (Isaiah 42:8)

² The Israelites were the generations of families born through the 12 sons of Jacob (the grandson of Abraham), who God renamed, Israel (see Genesis 32:28). These families grew into what are known as the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

You alone, whose name is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth. (Psalm 83:18)

For who is God, except Yahweh? (Psalm 18:31)

There is authority and holiness in the name of God that those who know Him recognize. Maybe that's why when Jesus was asked to teach his disciples how to pray, he began with, "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy" (Matthew 6:9).

Authority in the Name...

After Jesus drove out those who were buying and selling in the temple in Jerusalem, "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders came to him, and they began saying to him, 'By what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things?'" (Mark 11:27-28). This took place the day after Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, during which crowds of people cried out, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord [Yahweh]!"³ (Matthew 21:9, quoting Psalm 118:26). For some reason the Jewish authorities were blinded to what the common people could see, that Jesus acted in the name, and authority of his Father, God—as Jesus openly declared.

"I have come in my Father's name, and you don't receive me . . ."
(John 5:43)

Even a Roman soldier in Galilee knew that Jesus acted under a higher authority when he pleaded with Jesus to cure his paralyzed servant.

"Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am also a man under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and tell another, 'Come,' and he comes; and tell my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to those who followed, "Most certainly I tell you, I haven't found so great a faith, not even in Israel." (Matthew 8:8-10)

Other scriptures show more of the areas in which Jesus' authority was recognized or stated.

They were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1:22)

Amazement came on all, and they spoke together, one with another, saying, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" (Luke 4:36)

³ The name of God is not included in quotations taken from the Old Testament in any of the known copies of New Testament writings. The Jewish replacement "Lord" (without capital letters) is used. In this book "[Yahweh]" will be added where used in Old Testament quotations, to help distinguish the use of the word "Lord" from references to Jesus.

“I spoke not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”
(John 12:29)

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” (then he said to the paralytic), “Get up, and take up your mat, and go up to your house.” He arose and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (Matthew 9:6-8)

“As the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself. He also gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man.” (John 5:26-27)

Power and Authority of God...

The Bible testifies that Jesus acted under the power and authority of his Father as a testimony that he truly was the promised Christ (the Messiah), through whom God would provide salvation.

“Men of Israel, hear these words! Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God to you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as you yourselves know.” (Acts 2:22)

“God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” (Acts 10:38)

Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

A New Name...

Jesus came into the world in the name (authority) of Yahweh, God of the Old Testament Jewish Scriptures, who Jesus called Father. Now we see authority also in a new name—in the name of Jesus.

And being found in human form, he [Jesus] humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth. (Philippians 2:8-10)

He [God] raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. (Ephesians 1:20-21)

Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .” (Matthew 28:18-19)

"Most certainly I tell you, whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."
(John 16:23-24)

What's in a Name?

If the name is Jesus, there is the authority of God. All authority is from God, "for there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are ordained by God" (Romans 13:1).

Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus; who was faithful to him who appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house.
(Hebrews 3:1-2)

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know certainly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36)

"All the prophets testify about him, that through his name everyone who believes in him will receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43)

"There is salvation in none other, for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, by which we must be saved!"
(Acts 4:12)

Something to Think About:

The apostles, Peter and John, witnessed the power of the name of Jesus when a lame beggar asked them for a gift of charity.

Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" He took him by the right hand, and raised him up. Immediately his feet and his ankle bones received strength. Leaping up, he stood, and began to walk. He entered with them into the temple, walking, leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:6-8)

The name of Jesus still has the same power and authority as it had in the time of the apostles. It's not a magic word to be used according to our desires. God is still the power behind miracles. He uses them according to His will through those who know Him.

What's in a name? It's only a word if we have no relationship.

But as many as received him [Jesus], to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name . . .
(John 1:12)

3. In the Beginning...

When was the beginning?

The Bible begins with “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Does this mark only the beginning of God’s creation of the world and mankind? Did angels already exist at this time with God, in a different, maybe “third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2)?⁴ Since God is not bound by time, was Genesis 1:1 the beginning of time as we know it? God has not chosen to reveal these things to us in the Bible. It does say, however, that Jesus was there in the beginning as the Word of God. It also gives us some interesting insight into the events of the creation of the world through Jesus.

In the beginning⁵ was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. (John 1:1-3)

“Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24) seen in creation as God spoke the world into existence through His Word. The Bible shows this wisdom personified in Proverbs 8 as the events of creation unfold.

“Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of his work, before his deeds of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth existed. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world.

“When he established the heavens, I was there; when he set a circle on the surface of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when the springs of the deep became strong, when he gave to the sea its boundary, that the waters should not violate his commandment, when he marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was the craftsman by his side. I was a delight day by day, always rejoicing before him, rejoicing in his whole world. My delight was with the sons of men.” (Proverbs 8:22-31)

God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

⁴ Job 38:4-7 says, “the sons of God [i.e., angels] shouted for joy” when God laid the foundations of the earth.

⁵ Any underlining in Bible verses was added for emphasis, and is not part of the original verse.

Proverbs 8 concludes with the Word of God saying...

"Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, for blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise. Don't refuse it. Blessed is the man who hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my door posts. For whoever finds me, finds life, and will obtain favor from Yahweh. But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul. All those who hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:32-36)

For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. There is no creature that is hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Throughout the Bible there are insights to the beginning, the creation, and to what's described as being "before the foundation of the world." Many of these scriptures show more of what God has revealed to us about Jesus...

... who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things are held together. (Colossians 1:15-17)

Having become so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they have. For to which of the angels did he [Yahweh] say at any time, "You are my Son. Today have I become your father?" And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he will be to me a Son?" (Hebrews 1:4-5, quoting from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14)

... who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God. (1 Peter 1:20-21)

"Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24)

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, being small among the clans of Judah, out of you one will come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent out his Son, born to a woman, born under the law... (Galatians 4:4)

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will call his name 'Jesus.'" (Luke 1:30-31)

Some Things to Meditate On:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love; having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire. (Ephesians 1:3-5)

But we are bound to always give thanks to God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth; to which he called you through our Good News, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before times eternal . . . (2 Timothy 1:9)

When did “time” begin? Albert Einstein discovered an interesting connection between time and light. His theory of relativity states that as an object approaches the speed of light, time appears to slow down, and then stop, when the object reaches the speed of light (as viewed from a particular point of reference).

Einstein’s theory may be hard to understand, but it illustrates the fact that since light is moving at a speed of 186,282 miles per second, it implies the existence of both physical space (miles), and of time (seconds).

“In the beginning . . .” (Genesis 1:1), on the first day of creation, God created light (Genesis 1:3). Time was then visually shown as “God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ There was evening and there was morning, one day” (Genesis 1:4-5).

We could assume that this was the beginning of “time” as we know it, but we can know from the Bible that (in some form) Jesus was there—in the beginning.



**“God created man in his own image.
In God’s image he created him;
male and female he created them.”
(Genesis 1:27)**

4. The Image of God

“When you look in the mirror, what comes to mind? Are you happy and pleased or confused and discouraged? Does your heart sink? Do you feel overwhelmed and unsure as to how to change it? Do you long to feel good every morning when you get dressed but don’t know how?”⁶

The words above are from an image consultant website that offers to change the perception of who you are. People have a need for image consultants because we see something wrong in ourselves. Why is this? The Bible says, “God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). It doesn’t go into detail as to what this means, but we are obviously not perfect like God. We all have had a tendency to sin from the first man, Adam. Sin affects our image of our self.

For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

While we were created in the image of God, the Bible says that Jesus “is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), and “the very image of his substance” (Hebrews 1:3). And while we have all fallen into sin, the Bible says that Jesus “was revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

Jesus is Different...

As we read through the Bible it’s plain to see that while Jesus was here in the world, he was like us, but different.

Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, didn’t consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:5-7)

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. They shall call his name Immanuel”; which is, being interpreted, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23, quoting from Isaiah 7:14)

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself . . .
(2 Corinthians 5:19)

For in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily . . .
(Colossians 2:9)

For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him [Jesus]; and through him to reconcile all things to himself [God]. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Sin separated mankind from God and the image that He has created us to be. Jesus came into the world to open the way back to God.

⁶ <http://totalimageconsultants.com/>

Having then a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold tightly to our confession. For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:14-15)

Be it known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man is proclaimed to you remission of sins. (Acts 13:38)

"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

We Will Be Changed...

All who come to Jesus are freed from the burden of the judgment due for their sins (John 5:24). Through Jesus we can ask forgiveness from God and be reconciled to Him as His child (Colossians 1:13-14; John 1:12-13). The Bible says that those who are children of God will one day be like Jesus, the unperturbed image of God.

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when he [Jesus] is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is. (1 John 3:2)

For whom he [God] foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20-21)

Something to Think About... for now

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be sober and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ— as children of obedience, not conforming yourselves according to your former lusts as in your ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all of your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy; for I [Yahweh] am holy." (1 Peter 1:13-16, quoting from Leviticus 11:44-45)

In the world today there are those who hire image consultants to make them into something that they want others to perceive them to be. Jesus used the term "hypocrite" to describe religious leaders who tried to appear to be something that they were not.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitened tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (Matthew 23:27)

Maybe we too sometimes try to appear to be religiously upright, but inside we know who we truly are. We all struggle with sin. Only God can change us from the inside out. The more time that we spend with God, the more we naturally start to become like His Son. God is the only image consultant who can truly change us.

It Begins With Jesus...

It all begins with a relationship with God made possible through Jesus.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

As we then walk with God, the fruit of His Spirit is manifested in our lives—“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23). And we reflect the image of God.

We begin this relationship with God by coming to Him with a repentant heart for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Have mercy on me, God, according to your loving kindness. According to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions. My sin is constantly before me. Against you, and you only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight . . .
(Psalm 51:1-4)



**“Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again,
but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him
will never thirst again;
but the water that I will give him
will become in him a well of water
springing up to eternal life.”
(John 4:13-14)**

5. The Fullness of God

It's been said that an optimist sees a partial glass of water as being half-full, while a pessimist sees it as half-empty. Fullness is perceived in different ways by different people depending on their situation, wants, and needs. The Bible says that "you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). What is this "fullness of God"? Is there a "half-full" with God that we can be optimistic in having?

God's Word says of Jesus that "in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him [Jesus]; and through him to reconcile all things to himself [God], by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens, having made peace through the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

His [God's] divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue; by which he has granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

Satisfying a Thirst...

John 4:7-30 tells the story of a woman who Jesus met at a well in Samaria. He knew that she had a thirst in her life that couldn't be satisfied with water. Only God could fill the void in her life that she tried to fill with a sinful lifestyle. A life change takes place when we understand the love of God that caused Him to send His Son to die for our sins, and then by faith drop our burden of sins at the feet of our Savior, who willingly died in our place. When God enters into our life, our thirst is satisfied (Psalm 107:8-9).

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me [Jesus] and drink! He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water." But he said this about the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. (John 7:37-39)

The Bible says that God's Spirit enters into all who by faith come to Him through Jesus as their Savior (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:8-9). We then begin to see God's power and provision in our lives as we follow Jesus as our Lord (Ephesians 3:20-21). The fullness of God is in Jesus.

I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:13)

I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me. That life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.
(Galatians 2:20)

As therefore you received Christ Jesus, the Lord, walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in it in thanksgiving. Be careful that you don't let anyone rob you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ. For in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in him you are made full, who is the head of all principality and power.
(Colossians 2:6-10)

Something to Think About:

How much God do you want? Is your optimistic half-full glass really half empty? Jesus shows us through his analogy of a grape vine that there can be no half-full in our commitment to a life of faith in God through Jesus.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. . . .

"I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:1-2, 5-6)

The woman at the well rejoiced when she learned that Jesus was the Messiah from God who she was waiting for (John 4:25-26). She went and told others and brought them to Jesus. Her life was changed. There is danger, however, after the joy of finding Jesus, of letting worldly temptations draw us away from God back to our old sinful life.

For if, after they have escaped the defilement of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in it and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. (2 Peter 2:20)

We walk in the fullness of God and the power of His Spirit only as we follow Jesus as Lord of our life. A choice has to be made daily (Luke 9:23-25; John 12:24-26). Stay close to him. Your glass will be full to overflowing.

". . . I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."
(John 10:10)

6. What's in a Word?

In many things we all stumble. If anyone doesn't stumble in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. . . . But nobody can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the image of God. Out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:2, 8-10)

What's in a word? A word spoken can change the direction of our entire life. Once out of our mouth, we can't bring them back. The words that we speak have a life of their own that can live on long after our bodies have gone to the grave. Our words have the power to heal or cripple, to encourage or condemn.

Jesus said that we speak out of that which fills our heart. Our words reveal the true selves that we hide within. Who we are goes out of us in our words.

“For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things.” (Matthew 12:34-35)

The Word of God...

Since words reveal much about who we are, what can we learn about God through Jesus, who is called the Word of God?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him was not anything made that has been made. (John 1:1-3)

God spoke the worlds into existence through Jesus, who revealed “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

By faith, we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which are visible. (Hebrews 11:3, see also Psalm 33:6, 9)

God Then Spoke...

God then spoke to His people during Old Testament times through (preincarnate) Jesus, who many see as being “the angel of Yahweh” (Exodus 3:1-6; 23:20-23 / Acts 7:30-38 / 1 Corinthians 10:1-4). The Bible says, “No one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18). Jesus spoke the words of God as “the angel of his presence” (Isaiah 63:9) in “Yahweh's form” (Numbers 12:8).

But in the fullness of time, the Word came forth from God and became flesh as Jesus, the Son of God (see Hebrews 1:4-5).

...who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:6-7)

The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son . . . (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I tell you, I speak not from myself; but the Father who lives in me does his works. (John 14:10)

The Bible says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). He revealed Himself to us in a way that we could understand through Jesus.

What's in a Word?

There is always a part of the one who speaks it. The presence and authority of God are in the Word of God.

He who rejects me, and doesn't receive my sayings, has one who judges him. The word that I spoke, the same will judge him in the last day. (John 12:48)

For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. There is no creature that is hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

What's in God's Word? — Life

"Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and doesn't come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24)

... having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever. (1 Peter 1:23)

Something to Think About:

Putting away therefore all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. (1 Peter 2:1-3)

"Oh taste and see that Yahweh is good. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." (Psalm 34:8)

7. Son of God

It was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came around him and said to him, "How long will you hold us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you don't believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me. But you don't believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Therefore Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?" The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can't be broken), do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am *the*⁷ Son of God'?" (John 10:22-36, with Jesus quoting from Psalm 82:6)

When accused in this passage of making himself God, Jesus responds, "I am *the* Son of God." Jesus made a number of statements in regard to His relationship with His Father that caused some controversy and left people wondering who He was claiming to be.

"He who sees me sees him who sent me." (John 12:45)

". . . If you knew me, you would know my Father also." (John 8:19)

"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

". . . the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (John 10:38)

But throughout the New Testament, Jesus is acknowledged to be the God's Son, as He claimed to be in the opening passage above.

An angel told Mary that Jesus would be called God's Son.

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called *the* Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

John the Baptist introduced Jesus as God's Son.

"I didn't recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, 'On whomever you will see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."
(John 1:33-34)

⁷ The word "the" is in italics when not present in the Greek manuscripts.

God calls Jesus His Son.

For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We heard this voice come out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:17-18)

Demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God.

Behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29)

The devil said to him, "If you are *the* Son of God, command this stone to become bread." (Luke 4:3)

Demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" Rebuking them, he didn't allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. (Luke 4:41)

Jesus was crucified because of his claim to be God's Son.

They all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say it, because I am." (Luke 22:70)

The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself *the* Son of God." (John 19:7)

"He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now, if he wants him; for he said, 'I am *the* Son of God.'" (Matthew 27:43)

Roman guards at the cross believed that Jesus was God's Son.

Now the centurion, and those who were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, "Truly this was *the* Son of God." (Matthew 27:54)

The disciples taught that Jesus is the Son of God.

Saul stayed several days with the disciples who were at Damascus. Immediately in the synagogues he proclaimed the Christ, that he is the Son of God. (Acts 9:19-20)

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15)

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:5)

Therefore Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

Something to Think About:

Jesus came into the world to open the way for us to share in the relationship that he has with his Father—as adopted sons and daughters.

God sent out his Son, born to a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children. (Galatians 4:4-5)

For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)

During Old Testament times, the people of God knew Him by His memorial name, “Yahweh” (Exodus 3:15). Now as children of God, we can call God, Father, as Jesus did.

United We Stand...

We saw in the opening verses of this section that Jesus caused some controversy when he said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). Jesus used this same language in a prayer to God for us. He prayed that we who are children of God would have the same unity of mind and spirit that he shares with his Father.

“Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me.

“The glory which you have given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me.” (John 17:20-23)

Divided We Are...

Unfortunately, right from the start there were divisions in the family of God which have separated us from the oneness that Jesus prayed we would share with each other and with God.

I beg you, brothers, through the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Philippians 2:2)

Divisions arise when we go beyond the simple truths recorded in the Bible by creating doctrines about things which God has not chosen to fully reveal.

**“I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father, except through me.”
(John 14:6)**



**For there is one God,
and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus.
(1 Timothy 2:5)**

8. Son of Man

I saw in the night visions, and behold, there came with the clouds of the sky one like a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

Jesus came forth from God into the world as the Son of God, but he also referred to himself as the Son of Man. It's interesting that in his usage of the designation "the Son of Man," it always seems as if Jesus is talking about someone else.

Matthew: "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come." (Matthew 12:32)

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds." (Matthew 16:27)

Mark: He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)

"For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

Luke: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Luke 12:40)

"Therefore be watchful all the time, praying that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will happen, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:36)

John: Jesus therefore said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing of myself, but as my Father taught me, I say these things." (John 8:28)

The multitude answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ remains forever. How do you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up?' Who is this Son of Man?" (John 12:34)

While Jesus walked among us, he is the only one that the Bible records as using the term "the Son of Man" in reference to himself. This is recorded 30 times in Matthew, 13 in Mark, 26 in Luke, and 11 times in John. After his ascension, only Stephen is recorded as calling Jesus "the Son of Man"—seeing him in a vision while being stoned to death.

But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:55-56)

Elsewhere, the apostle John refers to "one like a son of man" (as in the opening verse from Daniel), twice in his Revelation visions.

And among the lampstands was one like a son of man clothed with a robe reaching down to his feet, and with a golden sash around his chest. (Revelation 1:13)

I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud one sitting like a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. (Revelation 14:14)

Why Son of Man?

The Old Testament uses the phrase "son of man" a total of 107 times in reference to men, 93 times as God speaks to the prophet Ezekiel.

He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you." (Ezekiel 2:1)

Jesus may have used this term to show his humanity, as one born through the line of David in fulfillment of prophecy—or maybe just to identify himself with us. But the Bible shows the importance placed on acknowledging the humanity of Jesus. Denying that Jesus came in the flesh as the Christ (Messiah) of God is identified with satanic activity.

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. (1John 2:22)

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who don't confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist. (2 John 1:7)

Jesus Had to Die...

Jesus had to become a man to die... God's perfect sacrifice for our sins.

Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in the same way partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, "Sacrifice and offering you didn't desire, but you prepared a body for me. You had no pleasure in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O God.'"

... by which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:4-7, 10)

Jesus Became Our Mediator...

Jesus became a man to bridge the divide between God (as Son of God) and us (as Son of Man).

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:17-18)

Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

Something to Meditate On:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained; what is man, that you think of him? What is the son of man, that you care for him? For you have made him a little lower than God, and crowned him with glory and honor. You make him ruler over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet. (Psalm 8:3-6, see 1 Corinthians 15:27 and Hebrews 2:6-9)

Jesus became a man to die so that we could have life. “For since death came by man, the resurrection of the dead also came by man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Jesus is called “the last Adam”—the beginning of God's “new creation” in Christ.

Therefore we know no one after the flesh from now on. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:16-17)

So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However that which is spiritual isn't first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. As we have borne the image of those made of dust, let's [or “we will”] also bear the image of the heavenly. (1 Corinthians 15:45-49)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20-21)



Behold, how great a love the Father has bestowed on us,
that we should be called children of God!

1 John 3:1

9. Jesus' Relationship with His Father

We all have (or had) some kind of relationship with our fathers. Unfortunately, sometimes our idea of God as our heavenly Father may be negatively influenced by the relationship we've had with our earthly father. Jesus' relationship with his Father is an example of an ideal father-son (or daughter) relationship that we too can share with God.

Calling God "Father" was thought to be blasphemous during the time that Jesus was here in the world. It got Jesus into serious trouble with the religious leaders.

For this cause therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

But Jesus had the right to call God "Father". The angel Gabriel told his mother, Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called *the* Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The Bible describes Jesus as "the one and only⁸ Son of God" (John 3:18), but it also says that Jesus came "that we might receive the adoption of [as] children" of God (Galatians 4:5). Jesus came to introduce us to his Father and to open the way to God.

"This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3)

We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we know him who is true . . . (1 John 5:20)

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God. He has seen the Father. (John 6:46)

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me." (John 14:6)

No Exclusivity...

While Jesus has this unique position with his Father, he claimed no exclusivity with God. When he taught his disciples to pray, he began with "Our Father in heaven . . ." (Matthew 6:9). Again, after Jesus was raised from the grave, he told Mary to tell his disciples, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17). Because of Jesus we too can share in the blessing of knowing God as our Father.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

For you are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)

⁸ Modern Bible translations no longer use "begotten" ("the only begotten Son of God"), but it better reflects God's unique divine involvement in the birth of Jesus (see Luke 1:35).

While Jesus was here in the world, he showed us the kind of relationship that we too can share with God. Even though Jesus was separated from his Father, they had an ongoing relationship through prayer.

Talking With God...

Jesus talked with His Father before he chose his 12 apostles.

It happened in these days that he went out to the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. When it was day, he called his disciples, and from them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles. (Luke 6:12-13)

Jesus humbly questioned his Father as he prayed on the Mount of Olives with his disciples before he was betrayed and crucified.

He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."
(Luke 22:41-42)

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, his close relationship with his Father was temporarily broken as Jesus took our sins upon himself.

About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?" That is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Jesus told a parable to show us that even when it seems like God is not hearing us, we should by faith, "always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1). He ended the parable with...

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

Complete Obedience...

As Jesus carried out what God sent him to do, he revealed the love and obedience that he had toward his Father.

Though he was a Son, yet [Jesus] learned obedience by the things which he suffered. (Hebrews 5:8)

"But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father commanded me, even so I do." (John 14:31)

And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:8)

This passage in Philippians goes on to say...

Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)

The Bible reminds us...

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:5-7, quoting from Proverbs 3:34)

Unity of Mind...

Throughout the gospel writings we can see a unity of mind and spirit between God and His son Jesus, who is called the image of his Father (Colossians 1:15).

"If you knew me, you would know my Father also." (John 8:19)

Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. (Ephesians 5:1)

Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2)

... be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus, that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

Respect...

There is a recognized line of authority and respect that Jesus has with his Father, "... for the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

He said to them, "It isn't for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within his own authority." (Acts 1:7)

"But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32)

The fear [respect, reverence] of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom. The knowledge of the Holy one is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)

A Desire to Please...

"He who sent me is with me. The Father hasn't left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." (John 8:29)

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (2 Peter 1:17)

Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? For if I were still pleasing men, I wouldn't be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10)

Something to Think About:

Jesus came to introduce us to God so that we too can call Him Father and share in the relationship that he has with God.

"Righteous Father, the world hasn't known you, but I knew you; and these knew that you sent me. I made known to them your name, and will make it known; that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:25-26)

As many as received him [Jesus], to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

... in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God. For you didn't receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:14-17)

What does it mean to suffer with Jesus?

The Bible says that "though he was a Son, yet [Jesus] learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).

For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

As children of God in this world, we too will encounter challenges and temptations as we try to live in obedience to God (see 1 Peter 2:11-12, 20-24 and 4:1-4, 12-16). God is a good Father who will help us—even if it requires discipline to turn us from sin.

My son, don't despise Yahweh's discipline, neither be weary of his reproof: for whom Yahweh loves, he reproves; even as a father reproves the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:11-12, quoted in Hebrews 12:5-6)

It is for discipline that you endure. God deals with you as with children, for what son is there whom his father doesn't discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have been made partakers, then are you illegitimate, and not children. (Hebrews 12:7-8)

No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings. But may the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

Jesus reminds us that...

"... whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:50)

10. Jesus' Relationship with His Family

Family relationships can be difficult. We're all different—and often our differences can irritate those who we live with. The Bible tells us that Joseph, the great grandson of Abraham, was tormented by his brothers because he was the favorite of his father, Jacob. It didn't help when he told his brothers about a dream that he had in which their bindings of sheaves of grain in a field bowed down to his binding (Genesis 37:6-8). You can imagine how Jesus' brothers must have felt after he started working miracles and claiming to be the Son of God.

His brothers therefore said to him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that your disciples also may see your works which you do. For no one does anything in secret, and himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world." For even his brothers didn't believe in him. (John 7:3-5)

Early Years...

When Jesus was growing up, it must have been hard for Mary and Joseph not to treat him differently. Who would forget being told by an angel that this child would be a king (Luke 1:30-32), or more especially, that God was his father?

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called *the* Son of God." (Luke 1:34-35)

During his young years, the Bible only tells us that "the child was growing, and was becoming strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40).

Maybe family life was somewhat normal until Jesus turned 12 years old. The Bible then records that when they went to celebrate a feast in Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph didn't know that Jesus had stayed behind talking in the Temple while they began the journey back to Nazareth.

But supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey, and they looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they didn't find him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for him. It happened after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When they saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I were anxiously looking for you." He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?" They didn't understand the saying which he spoke to them. (Luke 2:44-50)

The Bible says that Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents and was subject to them, “and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:51-52).

Ministry Begins...

Around the age of 30 Jesus was baptized. God’s Spirit came upon him, and he began his time of ministry.

Now it happened, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also had been baptized, and was praying. The sky was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form as a dove on him; and a voice came out of the sky, saying “You are my beloved Son. In you I am well pleased.” Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years old, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph. (Luke 3:21-23)

Jesus was baptized by John, who was called “the Baptist” because he preached a “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3). John was related to Jesus through Elizabeth, a “relative” of his mother Mary (Luke 1:36). Apparently John and Jesus didn’t spend much time together while growing up. John told the priests and Levites who came to question him about Jesus that he didn’t recognize him.

“I didn’t recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, ‘On whomever you will see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”
(John 1:33-34)

Jesus was a descendant of King David, the son of Jesse, through both the line of Joseph (Matthew 1:1-16), and presumably the line of Mary (Luke 3:23-31). The Old Testament Scriptures prophesied that:

A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Changing Relationships...

Relationships changed when Jesus began his three-year time of ministry. Even people around his hometown started to question who Jesus was claiming to be. They had seen Jesus grow up. What had changed?

He came into his own country, and his disciples followed him. When the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many hearing him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things?” and, “What is the wisdom that is given to this man, that such mighty works come about by his hands? Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judah, and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” They were offended at him. Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house.” (Mark 6:1-4)

The Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down out of heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say, 'I have come down out of heaven?'" (John 6:41-42)

The multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. When his friends heard it, they went out to seize him: for they said, "He is insane." (Mark 3:20-21)

While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him. One said to him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you." But he answered him who spoke to him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" He stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50)

What About Mary?

Nothing is mentioned of Joseph after this time, but Mary continued to play an important role in the life of her son—from being instrumental in his first recorded miracle (John 2:1-11), to being with him at the cross.

But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Therefore when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:25-27)

What Happened to Jesus' Family?

After Jesus returned to his Father in heaven (Acts 1:9), Mary is again noted as being gathered with the apostles when they chose a replacement for the apostle Judas, who had hung himself after betraying Jesus (Matthew 27:3-5). The Bible notes that also present were Jesus' brothers, who during his active ministry "didn't believe in him" (John 7:5).

All these with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer and supplication, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

There is speculation that the epistle of James was written by Jesus' oldest half-brother, James (Matthew 13:55). 1 Corinthians 15:7 says that after Jesus was raised, "he appeared to James, then to all the apostles." There is also a James mentioned in Acts 15:1-21, who is a leader in the congregation of believers in Jerusalem, and who makes the final judgment in regard to a dispute regarding Gentile converts. Since the apostle, James, had already been martyred by this time (see Acts 12:2 and 12:17), this James must have been someone who would have had the respect of the apostles. Paul calls James "the Lord's brother" in his letter to the Galatians (verse 1:19) as he shares about the events of his own coming to believe in Jesus.

Something to Think About:

Jesus continues to be an influence in family relationships. There is a new closeness through the common bond of Christ in a family, but also potential conflict if only some members of a family become part of the family of God.

"Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn't come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me." (Matthew 10:34-37)

"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" He stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matthew 12:48-50)

Family of God...

Family life is built on relationships; getting to know each other personally through time spent together. It's the same in the family of God. Jesus came to open the way for us to know God—not to know about God through religion, but to know God personally in a growing relationship.

"This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3)

But if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he doesn't yet know as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, the same is known by him. (1 Corinthians 8:2-3)

Men have created many religions to try to get to God, but God doesn't want religion. His heart desire is a relationship with anyone who is seeking to know Him. Religion is based on rules for doing and not doing. In a relationship you grow to understand the will and desires of the one whom you love—and try to please them. Jesus is our example.

"He who sent me is with me. The Father hasn't left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." (John 8:29)

We create rules of religion because we are comfortable with boundaries. We can feel good about ourselves in our boundaries—even if we have to stretch them a little. When asked by a lawyer what the greatest commandment in the law was, Jesus took away the boundaries.

Jesus said to him, "you shall love the Lord [Yahweh] your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18)

Life in the family of God is a relationship built on love. God gives us His Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and puts His love in our hearts (Romans 5:5), when we are “born again” spiritually as His child (John 3:5-7). Knowing God personally gives us the desire to please Him as Jesus did, and the ability to love others through His love.

If a man says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who doesn’t love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and closes his heart of compassion against him, how does the love of God remain in him? My little children, let’s not love in word only, neither with the tongue only, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

Love is patient and is kind; love doesn’t envy. Love doesn’t brag, is not proud, doesn’t behave itself inappropriately, doesn’t seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil; doesn’t rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who doesn’t love doesn’t know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

[Jesus said...] “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)



**Trust in Yahweh with all your heart,
and don't lean on your own understanding.**

**In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.**

Proverbs 3:5-6

11. Jesus' Relationship with People

When Jesus walked in this world he showed a full range of human emotions from tears to anger. Jesus had friends like we do. He also had enemies. Jesus had a controversial message from his Father to share with the world. He taught a living relationship with God that went beyond obedience to commandments of religion to complete and total faith. Jesus came into the world to open the way to a personal relationship with God to any who would fully trust and follow him.

As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder,' 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.'" He said to him, "Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth."

Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross." But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions. Jesus looked around, and said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:17-23)

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters . . ." (Matthew 6:24). We can't fully trust in God if we continue to trust in something else. Our relationship with God begins with trust. Our faith in God grows when we un-insulate ourselves from things that we are trusting in so that God can show His faithfulness in practical ways that we can see.

"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:30)

Growing Faith...

Jesus sought to encourage the growth of faith in those whom he knew. The Bible says that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (John 11:5), yet when Lazarus got sick, Jesus didn't go to heal him. After Lazarus died, Jesus finally then went to see Martha and Mary.

Therefore when Mary came to where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died." When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They told him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. (John 11:32-36)

Was it emotion that caused Jesus to weep or their lack of faith? “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see God’s glory” (John 11:40)? Jesus showed them the power of faith in God as he openly prayed to his Father and then called forth Lazarus from the tomb.

On another occasion, after John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus withdrew to a deserted place to be alone—but he was followed.

Jesus went out, and he saw a great multitude. He had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When evening had come, his disciples came to him, saying, “This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.” But Jesus said to them, “They don’t need to go away. You give them something to eat.” (Matthew 14:14-16)

Jesus gave his disciples a chance to grow in faith and trust as they realized their own inability to meet this need. He then again taught faith as he looked to heaven and gave thanks to his Father. The few fish and loaves that they had were multiplied as the disciples distributed them to the people. Faith grows as we see God’s provision in response to needs that we entrust to Him.

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11)

“Therefore don’t be anxious, saying, ‘What will we eat?’, ‘What will we drink?’ or, ‘With what will we be clothed?’ . . . for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God’s Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:31-33)

God’s Word says that “faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself” (James 2:17). These works are acts based on faith; belief shown by action... trusting in God’s provision.

Righteous Anger...

Jesus displayed tender emotions of love and compassion to those who were open to God’s word, but those who perverted it angered him. On one occasion the religious leaders watched to see if Jesus would break their self-imposed Sabbath rules by healing a man with a withered hand. Jesus wasn’t afraid to confront religious legalism that had crept into the Sabbath.

[Jesus] said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? To save a life, or to kill?” But they were silent. When he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts, he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored as healthy as the other. The Pharisees went out, and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. (Mark 3:4-6)

Jesus also got angry when he saw people desecrating the holiness of the Temple by trying to make money from religion.

He entered into the temple, and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of robbers!'" (Luke 19:45-46... quoting Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11)

Jesus demonstrated and taught love, but often encountered hate. He told us to expect to be hated also if we follow him. Satan influences people as "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4)... but God's in control. Trust Him.

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you." (John 15:18)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:43-44)

All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

I have put my trust in God. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalm 56:11)

Controversial Actions...

Some of the emotions that Jesus evoked in people still cause questions today about who Jesus is. When Satan was tempting Jesus in the wilderness he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would bow before him in worship. Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord [Yahweh] your God, and you shall serve him only'" (Matthew 4:10, quoting from Deuteronomy 11:16).

The Bible records that the apostles and angels rejected worship.

When it happened that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up! I myself am also a man." (Acts 10:25-26)

Now I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who had shown me these things. He said to me, "See you don't do it! I am a fellow bondservant with you and with your brothers, the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." (Revelation 22:8-9)

So why did Jesus accept worship?

Behold, a leper came to him and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean." (Matthew 8:2)

Those who were in the boat came and worshipped him, saying, "You are truly *the* Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33)

Jesus is different than angels and you and me. The Bible says that God ordained the worship of Jesus.

Again, when he brings in the firstborn into the world he says, "Let all the angels of God worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)

And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth. (Philippians 2:8-10)

A New Role...

When Jesus confronted Thomas about doubting his resurrection, Thomas responded with a statement that has also caused some speculation about Jesus.

Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:27-28).

Jesus didn't respond to Thomas calling him God as he did to the Jews earlier.

The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can't be broken), do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am *the* Son of God?'" (John 10:33-36)

Jesus was quoting from Psalm 82 regarding those who God had raised up to righteously judge His people... but weren't.

God⁹ presides in the great assembly. He judges among the gods.⁹ "How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?" Selah. "Defend the weak, the poor, and the fatherless. Maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked." . . . I said, "You are gods, all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you shall die like men, and fall like one of the rulers." (Psalm 82:1-7)

But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." (Hebrews 1:8-9, quoting from Psalm 45:6-7)

"For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent him." (John 5:22-23)

⁹ The Hebrew word "elohiym" is used for "God" and "gods" in this passage and Psalm 45:6-7.

The Bible says, “God didn’t send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him” (John 3:17). When Jesus confronted Thomas, his work of salvation was completed. His work as God's righteous judge had begun.

Something to think about:

What is your relationship with Jesus? What emotion does his name bring about in you? Jesus came with a message of life to a dying world. Any time you try to bring change, some will embrace it while others will get angry, but most will continue in their old way.

“Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

“The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart”; that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:8-9, which is quoting from Deuteronomy 30:14)

Jesus came as a Savior. He is coming again as a judge.

“I am coming quickly! Hold firmly that which you have, so that no one takes your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will go out from there no more. I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God, and my own new name.” (Revelation 3:11-12)



Who are you waiting for?

12. The Promised One

For as through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19)

In the first book of the Bible we read about how Adam disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of Adam's sin, God drove him and his wife Eve away from Himself and out of the Garden of Eden. God cursed the earth and the serpent that deceived Eve and led to Adam's sin (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-34). But in His curse of the serpent (who is revealed as Satan, the devil, in Revelation 12:1-9, 20:2), God added a cryptic message regarding the future.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Two thousand plus years later, God again spoke about the future in a covenant with Abram (who God later renamed Abraham). God promised that through his family all of the families of the earth would be blessed.

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Get out of your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. All of the families of the earth will be blessed in you." (Genesis 12:1-3)

God also promised Abram that his descendants would possess the land that He led him to (Genesis 15:18), but first they "will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them . . . four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). Around 600 years after this promise, a branch of Abraham's family (those born through his grandson, Jacob) had grown into a great nation while living in slavery in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40; Deuteronomy 10:22). God chose Moses to lead this people (now called Israel), to the land promised to Abraham. Moses told the people...

"Yahweh your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples who are on the face of the earth. Yahweh didn't set his love on you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all peoples: but because Yahweh loves you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers . . ." (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

A Coming Prophet...

While on their 40-year wandering journey back to the land, God told Moses about a particular coming promised one. He will be part of this people, and will speak God's words as a prophet.

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brothers, like you; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. It shall happen, that whoever will not listen to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:18-19— see also Acts 3:22-23)

As we fast-forward another 450 years, David is now king of Israel in the "promised land." God made a new covenant with David which added to the promises made to Abraham. His sons would continue his reign, and the throne of his kingdom will be established forever.

"When your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. . . . Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

A Coming King...

Over the next 500 years, God continued to speak through prophets. Included in His words was a prophecy about a coming one in the line of David, who would reign as king on his throne forever.

For to us a child is born. To us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,¹⁰ Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, on the throne of David, and on his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from that time on, even forever. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

A Coming Priest...

A later prophecy foretold that a priest would reign on the throne.

A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1)

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Yahweh; even he shall build the temple of Yahweh; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne; and he shall be a priest on his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Zechariah 6:12-13 —see also Hebrews 5:5-6 and Ephesians 2:19-22)

It must have been unclear by now whether the promised one would come as a prophet, a king, or as a priest. But finally, 400 years after the last prophet spoke, God sent a message through His angel Gabriel, "to a virgin pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:27).

¹⁰ The Hebrew word "el" is translated "God" here.

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will call his name 'Jesus.' He will be great, and will be called *the Son of the Most High*. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom." (Luke 1:30-33)

Over 4,000 years after mankind was separated from God through Adam's sin, God brought forth the one who would open the way back to Himself, as a...

Prophet: (John 6:14; 12:49)... speaking God's words.

King: (Luke 1:32-33; 4:43)... bringing the kingdom of God.

Priest: (Hebrews 2:17; 9:11-15)... sacrificing himself for our sins.

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent out his Son, born to a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Giving thanks to the Father, who made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. (Colossians 1:12-14)

Something to Think About:

After over 4,000 years of prophecies and events culminated in the birth of Jesus, most of the people at that time didn't understand who Jesus was. They crucified him on a cross. But God's plan didn't fail.

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they didn't know him, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. Though they found no cause for death, they still asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had fulfilled all things that were written about him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead. (Acts 13:27-30)

For while we were yet weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man. Yet perhaps for a righteous person someone would even dare to die. But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

You were dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. He [God] made you alive together with him [Jesus], having forgiven us all our trespasses, wiping out the handwriting in ordinances which was against us; and he has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)

So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life. (Romans 5:18)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)



**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
then I will come in to him,
and will dine with him,
and he with me.”
(Revelation 3:20)**

13. The Sent One

“God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” (Acts 10:38)

The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus while he was being baptized by John in the Jordan River (Luke 3:21-23). The Bible says that “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil” (Luke 4:1-2). Jesus then returned to his home region of Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” and began his time of ministry by teaching in the synagogues (Luke 4:14-15). When Jesus attended his home synagogue in Nazareth, he was given the book of Isaiah to read from. He opened it and read from where it is written...

“The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me; because Yahweh has anointed me to preach good news to the humble. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of Yahweh’s favor . . .” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began to tell them, “Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:20-21)

Sent by God...

During his three-year time of ministry, Jesus stated over and over that he was sent by God. This is recorded twice in Matthew, once in Mark, four times in Luke, and 41 times in John.

Jesus said to them, “If God were your father, you would love me, for I came out and have come from God. For I haven’t come of myself, but he sent me.” (John 8:42)

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” (John 6:38)

“He who sent me is with me. The Father hasn’t left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” (John 8:29)

But even after being attested by God “by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him” (Acts 2:22), John the Baptist still felt the need to send his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the Coming One promised by God. Perhaps John wondered why Jesus wasn’t the reigning king that they were expecting based on prophecies in the Scriptures and the words of the angel to Mary.

Behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will call his name ‘Jesus.’ He will be great, and will be called *the* Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom.” (Luke 1:31-33, see also John 18:33-36)

Jesus again used words from Isaiah 61 in his reply to John's disciples.

When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptizer has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?'" In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and to many who were blind he gave sight. Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them." (Luke 7:20-22)

A Suffering Savior...

God gave Isaiah a prophecy about the coming of a mighty king in the line of David years before Jesus was born (Isaiah 9:6-7), but Isaiah was also given another prophecy—of one who would come as a suffering Savior. Since the Jewish people couldn't reconcile in their minds how a king could be a suffering Savior, they chose to believe that the coming one would be a king who (they thought) would free them from Roman rule. So when Jesus came, most people didn't recognize who he was, and thus through his crucifixion, took part in fulfilling the prophecy of the suffering Savior.

He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of suffering, and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face; and we didn't respect him. Surely he has borne our sickness, and carried our suffering; yet we considered him plagued, struck by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:3-6)

Jesus fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament Jewish Scriptures through his life and death. But all that he did for our redemption would have no value if God didn't send him.

Jesus prayed for those who believed...

When Jesus was ending his time in this world, he prayed for those who recognized who he was, and for all who through their testimony would believe that he was the promised one sent by God.

"I revealed your name to the people whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word. Now they have known that all things whatever you have given me are from you, for the words which you have given me I have given to them, and they received them, and knew for sure that I came forth from you, and they have believed that you sent me. . . .

"Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:6-8 and 20-21)

How do we know that God sent Jesus?

We know that Jesus spoke for God.

“My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone desires to do his will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is from God, or if I am speaking from myself.” (John 7:16-17)

God raised up Jesus from the dead.

“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous one, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, to which we are witnesses. (Acts 3:13-15)

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

God raised him up the third day, and gave him to be revealed, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen before by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
(Acts 10:40-41)

We have peace with God through Jesus.

Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand. (Romans 5:1-2)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only¹¹ Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
(John 3:16)

“Most certainly I [Jesus] tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and doesn’t come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (John 5:24)

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, give I to you. Don’t let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.” (John 14:27)

In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

. . . casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you.
(1 Peter 5:7)

¹¹ Earlier Bible translations read, “gave his only begotten Son.” See footnote #8 (page 27).

We no longer fear death or the devil.

To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in the same way partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

For you didn't receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15)

For God didn't give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

I have put my trust in God. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Psalm 56:11)

Something to Think About:

Do we still see only things that we want to see in the Bible? The Jews were looking for a prophesied king to free them from their present bondage to Rome. God sent a Savior to free them from their eternal bondage to sin and death.

Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Savior begins with, "Who has believed our message?" (Isaiah 53:1). The Bible still has a simple message for us today—but how many are seeing only what they want to see (or were taught to believe)?

It's important to understand that Jesus is coming a second time in judgment to carry out God's wrath against His enemies (Revelation 19:11-21). It's at that time that Jesus will fulfill the other prophecy in Isaiah 9:7 of the mighty king that the Jews were looking for. This will take place during his thousand year reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 20:1-6).

After this time all the dead will be raised for a final judgment. All who have rejected God's offer of forgiveness and reconciliation (which He made possible through the death of His Son Jesus in their place), will have to face their own judgment and eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:11-15).

Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment, (Hebrews 9:27)

We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

14. Last Names

Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

When we talk about Jesus Christ, it's almost like Christ is his last name. And in one sense, you could say that it is. Many last names are based on a relationship, like Johnson or Peterson. Others were derived from an occupation, such as Carpenter, Miller, and Smith. Our English word "Christ" is a transliteration of the New Testament Greek word pronounced *khristos*, meaning anointed, or the anointed one. The Old Testament Hebrew word for "anointed" (*mashiyach*) is where we get the English word Messiah from. Jesus has a unique occupation as Messiah or Christ—God's Anointed One.¹²

So Jesus can be called the Christ, Messiah, or more literally, the Anointed One.

The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah comes," (he who is called Christ). "When he has come, he will declare to us all things." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who speaks to you."
(John 4:25-26)

Therefore some of them of Jerusalem said, "Isn't this he whom they seek to kill? Behold, he speaks openly, and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is truly the Christ?"
(John 7:25-27)

"For truly, in this city against your holy servant, Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your council foreordained to happen." (Acts 4:27-28)

Old Testament Anointed Ones...

The Hebrew and Greek words that we translate as "Messiah" and "Christ" both mean "anointed" or "anointed one." The Old Testament Hebrew word *mashiyach* is used 39 times in reference to kings and priests of Israel—except for once in reference to a foreign king named Cyrus. God gave Isaiah a prophecy about Cyrus 150 years before he was used by God to free the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem after their 70 year Babylonian captivity.

Thus says Yahweh to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him . . . "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called you by your name. I have surnamed you, though you have not known me." (Isaiah 45:1, 4)

¹² See Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me; because Yahweh has anointed me to preach good news to the humble. . . ." (claimed by Jesus in Luke 4:18), and Acts 10:38 "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Another Old Testament prophecy of a future coming “Anointed One” is generally thought to be referring to Jesus.

Know therefore and discern that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the Anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troubled times. (Daniel 9:25)

A mention of God’s Anointed in Psalm 2 is ascribed to Jesus in Acts 4.

Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth take a stand, and the rulers take counsel together, against Yahweh, and against his Anointed. (Psalm 2:1-2)

[The Holy Spirit] “by the mouth of your servant, David, said, ‘Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth take a stand, and the rulers take council together, against the Lord, and against his Christ.’” (Acts 4:25-26)

Anointings...

Old Testament anointings were performed using special anointing oil that was poured on the person, or thing, that God said to anoint. The anointing visually set these apart to God as sanctified for His special purpose. These God-ordained anointings include the tabernacle (tent of meeting) and its contents, and Aaron and his sons as priests (Exodus 40:9-15). Jewish kings who were chosen by God were also anointed according to His direction (1 Samuel 9:15-16, 16:1-13). But in Psalm 45:6-7, we find a special anointing done by God Himself, which is attributed to Jesus in the New Testament.

But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.” (Hebrews 1:8-9, quoting from Psalm 45:6-7)

God set apart Jesus for a special plan and purpose.

“The Spirit of the Lord [Yahweh] is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [Yahweh].” (Luke 4:18-19, quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2)

“Do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You blaspheme,’ because I said, ‘I am *the* Son of God?’” (John 10:36)

Our Anointing...

The Bible says that those of us who are God’s children are also set apart to God (sanctified), and anointed with His Spirit. God has a special plan and purpose for each of our lives.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

He who establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

We are bound to always give thanks to God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth; to which he called you through our Good News, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

Something to Think About:

In the world today, last names are now mostly used to identify us by the family name of our father. While they no longer reveal what we do, the Bible says that what we do often reveals who our true father is. God calls His children to be “set apart”... sanctified.

In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the devil. Whoever doesn't do righteousness is not of God, neither is he who doesn't love his brother. (1 John 3:10)

[Jesus told the Pharisees...] “You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and its father.” (John 8:44)

Therefore, “Come out from among them, and be separate,” says the Lord [Yahweh]. “Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you. I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18, quoting from Isaiah 52:11 and 2 Samuel 7:14)

Do all things without murmurings and disputes, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world. (Philippians 2:14-15)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be sober and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ—as children of obedience, not conforming yourselves according to your former lusts as in your ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all of your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy; for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16, quoting from Leviticus 11:44-45)

Isaiah 46:5-7

“To whom will you liken me,
and make me equal,
and compare me,
that we may be like?

Some pour out gold from the bag,
and weigh silver in the balance.
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god.
They fall down—yes, they worship.
They bear it on the shoulder,
they carry it, and set it in its place, and it stands,
from its place it shall not move.

Yes, one may cry to it, yet it cannot answer,
nor save him out of his trouble.”

15. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

As we read through the Bible, we see Jesus associated together with his Father, God, and the Spirit of God, in verses such as these:

Jesus, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him. Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Now I beg you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. (Romans 15:30)

In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to little children." (Luke 10:21)

The apostle Peter addressed his fellow believers as "chosen ones . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood" (1 Peter 1:1-2). There is a common bond that can be seen in the Bible between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each has a distinct role in regard to our salvation.

God the Father...

God chose us through His foreknowledge, calls us to salvation, and has given us His Spirit.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love; having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire. (Ephesians 1:3-5)

"No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him . . . It is written in the prophets, 'They will all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who hears from the Father, and has learned, comes to me." (John 6:44-45, quoting Isaiah 54:13)

God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

Seeing it is God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

But of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, "He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord [Yahweh]." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, quoting from Jeremiah 9:24)

Now he who establishes us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the down payment of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

"It will happen that whoever will call on the name of Yahweh shall be saved . . ." (Joel 2:32, quoted in Romans 10:13 & Acts 2:21)

Jesus, the Son of God...

Jesus is the "Christ of God" (Luke 9:20), sent by his Father to fulfill His plan for our redemption (Romans 3:24; Psalm 49:15). The Bible says that Jesus "gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). Jesus redeemed (ransomed) us from the bondage we lived in through fear of death. We all were under the judgment of death because of our sins, for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The Bible says, "Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in the same way partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

God is just. The judgment for sin must be carried out. Death must be satisfied. God placed our sins on Jesus who died in our place. "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). God can now freely forgive sin through His grace because of Jesus.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his [God's] grace. (Ephesians 1:7)

All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

"For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, by which we must be saved!" (Acts 4:12)

Salvation is from Yahweh (Joel 2:32)... through Jesus (Acts 4:12).

The Good News of Jesus...

Now I declare to you, brothers, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold firmly the word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-3)

“But God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 13:30) and bestowed upon Jesus a kingdom (see Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 22:29; John 18:36).

He raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. (Ephesians 1:20-21)

[God] delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

He [Jesus] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (1 Corinthians 15:25-26)

Jesus is presently at the right hand of God interceding for us, watching over all whom he has redeemed.

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)

Therefore he is also able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, seeing that he lives forever to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

The Spirit of God...

When Jesus was leaving his disciples to return to his Father, he promised to send them a helper—the Holy Spirit. God gave us His Spirit to mark us as His own adopted child and help guide us through this life.

I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another counselor [Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Comforter], that he may be with you forever,—the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

And because you are children, God sent out the Spirit of his Son¹³ into your hearts, crying, “Abba,” Father! (Galatians 4:6)

...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is a pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

¹³ “Spirit of his Son”... see John 14:26 and Romans 8:14-15

Our Final Redemption...

But [we] ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23)

This final redemption of our bodies occurs during the end time events which are prophesied in the Bible. God's children will be resurrected from death in a new incorruptible state (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) when Jesus returns to take us to be with himself (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

This will be followed by the judgment of those who rejected Jesus. At that time the Bible says that Death and Hades will give up the dead who are in them for judgment. Then Death and Hades will be cast into the Lake of Fire along with those who are judged (Revelation 20:11-15). Death will be no more. "The last enemy that will be abolished is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

But when this corruptible will have put on incorruption, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

The Roles of the Spirit...

Jesus told his disciples that the Spirit will convict us of sin and our need for salvation.

"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go away, the counselor [Holy Spirit] won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he has come, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment." (John 16:7-8)

The Spirit of God sanctifies those who trust in Jesus for salvation, setting us apart as God's own possession.

Not by works of righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

But you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he who rejects this doesn't reject man, but God, who has also given his Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:7-8)

Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

The Spirit fills us, teaches us, empowers us, guides us in truth, and leads us according to God's will as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me . . ." (Acts 1:8)

"But when they deliver you up, don't be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." (Matthew 10:19-20)

The anointing [God's Spirit] which you received from him remains in you, and you don't need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things . . . (1 John 2:27)

For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, no one knows the things of God, except God's Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:11)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

Jesus told us to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). We do this in obedience to Jesus as our Lord, and as a public testimony of faith in all that God has done for our salvation. When the apostles were arrested by the Jewish religious leaders for preaching about salvation through Jesus, they too testified that their actions were done in the name (authority) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in obedience to God.

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed, hanging him on a tree. God exalted him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. We are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:29-32)

God freely provided the means for our redemption from the judgment due for our sins. Anyone who is seeking to know God can come to Him through Jesus for forgiveness and reconciliation—and then begin a personal relationship with God as His child. As our friendship with God grows, He reveals more of Himself to us through His Spirit and His Word, but there is much about God that will take an eternity to understand.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)



**“If I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again, and will receive you to myself;
that where I am, you may be there also.”
(John 14:3)**

16. Going Away

Has anybody here seen my old friend Abraham?
Can you tell me where he's gone?
He freed a lot of people, but it seems the good they die young.
I just looked around and he's gone.

These lyrics are from a 1968 recording by Dion, “Abraham, Martin, and John.” Dick Holler wrote this song about some men who had world-changing ideas that got them killed before they could see their work fully accomplished. Jesus spoke his message to the world for three short years before he was killed. But Jesus finished his work through his death. The Bible says that Jesus came to die so that “through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them [us] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus came to free a lot of people. He then returned to his Father.

“I came out from the Father, and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” (John 16:28)

“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many homes. If it weren’t so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also.” (John 14:1-3)

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don’t go away, the counselor [Holy Spirit] won’t come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he has come, he will convict the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment.” (John 16:7-8)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.” When he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. (Acts 1:8-9)

Abraham, Martin, and John...

Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and John Kennedy fought against slavery, discrimination and poverty—all of which stem from sin in this world. Jesus came to break the death grip of sin and free us from the slavery to sin which leads to the problems that we see in the world, as well as in our own lives.

For sin will not have dominion over you. For you are not under law, but under grace. (Romans 6:14)

Stand firm therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and don’t be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. . . . For you, brothers, were called for freedom. Only don’t use your freedom for gain to the flesh, but through love be servants to one another. (Galatians 5:1, 13)

Jesus Can Help...

Jesus lived with us here in this world. He knows our temptations and struggles with sin. Jesus, himself, was tempted by the devil with different worldly desires (Luke 4:1-13). The devil can make sin look attractive while slowly binding us again into the slavery of sin. Jesus is at the right hand of God interceding for us (Romans 8:34). We can look to Jesus for help. We need to stay close to God for protection.

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Be subject therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. (James 4:6-8, quoting from Proverbs 3:34)

My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor [Intercessor, Advocate] with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus continues to free a lot of people. And he's coming again.

Something to Think About:

Jesus shared a final meal with his twelve disciples before he was betrayed and crucified. During the meal he gave us something to remember him by until he comes again. Jesus used the simple elements of the meal, bread and wine, to help us remember why he died.

For I received from the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way he also took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink, in memory of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Judas shared in this last meal with Jesus before he left to betray him (Luke 22:19-22). We condemn Judas for what he did, but how often do we betray our Lord by choosing to follow temptation into some sin that he died for?

Search me, God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)

17. Coming Again...

“Every now and then when I messed up bad I would hear these dreaded words, ‘You just wait until your Father gets home boy.’ Now, that last sentence would strike fear into my heart. I heard it several times growing up. There was the agony of knowing that it would be my Father who was dealing with me and was not as ‘soft,’ as my mother. Also, there was the agony of the wait. In my own little mind it would be like being on death row. The minutes would drag by. There was no commuting this sentence. It was not used much, but when it was used, there would be no appeal.”¹⁴

Jesus is coming again. But we have a choice about whether this is something to look forward to, or something to fear. We have all messed up bad through sin, but Jesus came to take the judgment of anyone who is willing to let him stand in their place. We were all on “death row” waiting our judgment when Jesus came into the world to take the punishment that we deserved. Because of Jesus we can receive forgiveness from our Father and look forward to Jesus coming to take us to be with Him. But God’s righteous judgment still awaits those who refuse Jesus.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
(Hebrews 10:31)

But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God’s wrath through him. (Romans 5:8-9)

“One who believes in the Son has eternal life, but one who disobeys [disbelieves] the Son won’t see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” (John 3:36)

God’s Word doesn’t reveal when Jesus is coming again, but it does tell a few things about his return. Jesus told us to be ready and watchful.

When he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. While they were looking steadfastly into the sky as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white clothing, who also said, “You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who was received up from you into the sky will come back in the same way as you saw him going into the sky.” (Acts 1:9-11)

“Watch therefore, for you don’t know in what hour your Lord comes. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don’t expect, the Son of Man will come.” (Matthew 24:42-44)

¹⁴ <http://acalltotheremnant.com/2011/06/08/wait-till-your-father-gets-home/>

Now, brothers, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him, we ask you not to be quickly shaken in your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by letter as from us, saying that the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not be, unless the departure [falling away; apostasy] comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, he who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself up as God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 —see 1 Timothy 4:1; Mark 13:14)

He causes all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, and the free and the slave, to be given marks on their right hands, or on their foreheads; and that no one would be able to buy or to sell, unless he has that mark, the name of the beast or the number of his name. . . . His number is six hundred sixty-six. (Revelation 13:16-18)

Coming for His Own... “At the last trumpet”

When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. (Revelation 8:1-2)

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. (1 Corinthians 15: 51-52)

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as he declared to his servants, the prophets. (Revelation 10:7)

The seventh angel sounded, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ. He will reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15)

I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud one sitting like a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. Another angel came out from the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Send forth your sickle, and reap; for the hour to reap has come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe!” He who sat on the cloud thrust his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. (Revelation 14:14-16 —see also Matthew 24:29-31)

For the Lord [Jesus] himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

The last trumpet occurs before the angels come with the bowls of God’s wrath (Revelation 16:1-21). The Bible says that those who are children of God will escape the wrath of the righteous judgment of God.

For God didn’t appoint us to wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:9)

Coming in Judgment... To carry out the wrath of God

I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it is called Faithful and True. In righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has names written and a name written which no one knows but he himself. He is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood. His name is called "The Word of God."

The armies which are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in white, pure, fine linen. Out of his mouth proceeds a sharp, double-edged sword, that with it he should strike the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He treads the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. He has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16)

Coming to Judge... What each one has done

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds."
(Matthew 16:27)

For we must all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

"For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent him."
(John 5:22-23)

"He [God] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that this is he who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead."
(Acts 10:42)

I command you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom . . .
(2 Timothy 4:1)

Coming to Reign...

After Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to his apostles over a period of forty days "speaking about God's Kingdom" (Acts 1:3).

When they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you now restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It isn't for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within his own authority." (Acts 1:6-7)

This could occur during the end time prophecies recorded in chapter 20 of Revelation—before the final judgment—when Satan is bound for a 1000 years and Jesus is reigning as king, presumably on the throne of David (Ezekiel 37:24-28). This would fulfill Old and New Testament Jewish prophecies such as those in Ezekiel chapters 37 and 38, and Romans chapter 11.

But this is not the end.

The Kingdom of God...

Jesus taught us to pray to our Father, “May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Luke 11:2). This final Kingdom of God is seen in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 after the final judgment.

Then the end comes, when he [Jesus] will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For, “He [God] put all things in subjection under his feet.”

Then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24-26, 28, quoting from Psalm 8:6)

I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away. . . . I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with people, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1, 3-4)

There will be no curse any more [Genesis 3:17]. The throne of God and of the Lamb [Jesus] will be in it, and his servants serve him. (Revelation 22:3)

God’s word to His children...

Now, little children, remain in him [Jesus], that when he appears, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (1 John 2:28)

Therefore don’t throw away your boldness, which has a great reward. For you need endurance so that, having done the will of God, you may receive the promise. “In a very little while, he who comes will come, and will not wait. But the righteous will live by faith. If he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” (Hebrews 10:35-38, quoting Habakkuk 2:3-4)

God’s word to others...

“The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked. But now he commands that all people everywhere should repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31)

In the last days mockers will come, walking after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” . . . But don’t forget this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-9)

18. Witnesses of Jesus

“Seek not to understand that you may believe,
but believe that you may understand.”
Augustine of Hippo

We have the Bible. It tells about Jesus. So now what do we do with it? Do we say that we believe what it says and then set it on a shelf? What do we base our belief on? In a secular article by Ray Loring Johnson, he asks the question, “What does it mean to believe in something?”

Is it simply required to “say” you believe, to “actually” believe something, in your heart of hearts? Is it possible to do that? Is something within you required to change, to go in a certain direction, in order to “believe”? Are there “requirements” that must be met, within your own psyche, within your mind, to actually believe? Is it always based on blind faith?¹⁵

History and the Bible Tell of Jesus...

History tells us that a man named Jesus existed. His life influenced even the way that we count calendar years—marking time backwards “Before Christ” (BC or BCE), and then beginning a new count after his birth (AD *Anno Domini*, “in the year of our Lord,” or CE). We can know that Jesus was a historical figure, but how can we know anything else about him?

Jesus said that we can begin to understand who he is through the Bible.

“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me.” (John 5:39)

Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)

We don’t have Jesus with us anymore to explain the Scriptures, but God is willing to open the depth and truth of His Word through His Spirit.

[Jesus said...] “When the counselor [Holy Spirit] has come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me.” (John 15:26)

A Good Question...

Ray asks a good question above: “Is something within you required to change, to go in a certain direction, in order to believe?” Jesus said that beyond what we can learn through the Bible, it takes a personal response on our part (and on God’s part), to come to know him—a seeking heart and a humble spirit.

“No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him . . . It is written in the prophets, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who hears from the Father, and has learned, comes to me.” (John 6:44-45, quoting Isaiah 54:13)

¹⁵ <http://www.ericfrancis.com/issues/0306/believe.html>

"One who has my commandments, and keeps them, that person is one who loves me. One who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him." (John 14:21)

Calling Witnesses...

In a court of law, lawyers bring in witnesses to testify to the truth of what they are trying to prove to the jury. Those who have seen the changes that Jesus has made in their lives are potential witnesses of Jesus. Unfortunately, Satan, our adversary, will continually try to do whatever he can to condemn our character and keep us from testifying.

But the Bible reminds us that...

... the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. They overcame him because of the Lamb's [Jesus'] blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their life, even to death. (Revelation 12:10-11)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"When they lead you away and deliver you up, don't be anxious beforehand, or premeditate what you will say, but say whatever will be given you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." (Mark 13:11)

The Final Witness is God...

"It's also written in your law that the testimony of two people is valid. I [Jesus] am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me." (John 8:17-18)

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is God's testimony which he has testified concerning his Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. He who doesn't believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. The testimony is this, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has the life. He who doesn't have God's Son doesn't have the life. (1 John 5:9-12)

How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation—which at the first having been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard; God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders, by various works of power, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will? (Hebrews 2:3-4)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known of God is revealed in them, for God revealed it to them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)

Begin by Seeking God...

Belief isn't based on blind faith. It begins by seeking to know more about a God who has revealed His existence through creation. It grows as He leads us to Himself through Jesus and we begin a personal relationship with God as His child. It continues to grow as we spend time with God and see His help in our daily life. But it all depends on what we do with Jesus. God sent His Son to be the way through which we can come to Him.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

"He who rejects me, and doesn't receive my sayings, has one who judges him. The word that I spoke, the same will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48)

Something to Think About:

Yahweh looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any who understood, who sought after God. (Psalm 14:2)

"The God who made the world and all things in it, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, doesn't dwell in temples made with hands, neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself gives to all life and breath, and all things.

"He made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the surface of the earth, having determined appointed seasons, and the boundaries of their dwellings, that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." (Acts 17:24-27)

Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Seek Yahweh while he may be found; call you on him while he is near. (Isaiah 55:6)

Those who know your name will put their trust in you, for you, Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:10)

Most people want to enter into some kind of heavenly paradise when they die. God is looking for those who are seeking Him.

Who Did Jesus Say He Was?

"I am the bread of life.

He who comes to me will not be hungry,
and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:36)

"I am the light of the world.

He who follows me will not walk in the darkness,
but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. . . .
I know my own, and I'm known by my own." (John 10:11, 14)

"I am the sheep's door. . . .

If anyone enters in by me, he will be saved,
and will go in and go out, and will find pasture." (John 10:7-9)

"I am the resurrection and the life.

He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies." (John 11:25)

"I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father, except through me." (John 14:6)

"I am the vine. You are the branches.

He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me,
for I am gentle and lowly in heart;
and you will find rest for your souls."

Matthew 11:29

19. Final Thoughts

“Scrubbing the floor when no one else wanted to was something that my mother would have done. If I can’t be with her, the least I can do is act like her sometimes.” (Veronica Roth)

What would Jesus do if he were still here in the world? It used to be popular to have the initials WWJD (What would Jesus do?) on bracelets, T-shirts, and whatever. Maybe it still is? So while we’re still here in the world, what can we do to act like Jesus (maybe) sometimes? We could go crazy with this by applying this question to every situation in life. What would Jesus eat? How would he choose to travel? What would he wear? But what did Jesus do while he was here in the world? Why did he come?

The above quote is from Veronica Roth’s book *Divergent*. It’s a story of a society divided into five factions based on five virtues: honesty, selflessness, bravery, peacefulness, and intelligence. At age 16 you must decide which faction that you feel that you can prove you belong to. You then live your life separating yourself from those in other factions who hold to the perceived lesser virtues.

Is it so different in the world today? We divide ourselves into various denominations, religions, or personal ideas of virtue, in a vain attempt to fill the void that we feel because of our separation from God. Jesus came into the world to unseparate us from God.

Spiritual Death...

Any sin results in separation from God. Like death separates us from loved ones physically, sin separates us from God spiritually. Sin first entered into the world through Adam’s disobedience to God— “and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). We are spiritually dead (separated from God) because of sin—waiting to face our coming physical death and judgment.

God gave Adam one simple command by which he could show his love for God through trust and obedience.

Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)

Adam and Eve died spiritually the day that they disobeyed God—they could no longer walk with God in the garden of Eden, and were now subject to die physically in a world cursed because of sin (Genesis 3:16-19).

Therefore Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. (Genesis 3:23)

God is Just...

When a crime is committed, our civil laws require judgment. This might include time in prison or even a death sentence. We call this justice. Our civil sense of justice is a reflection of justice in the spiritual realm. God is just. There is judgment due for sin. A just God must punish all sin.

For the wages of sin is death . . . (Romans 6:23)

God is Loving and Merciful...

God is just, but God is also loving and merciful. While we were all locked away from God in a prison of sin awaiting our final death sentence, He sent His Son to take our place. Jesus died a death sentence for us all. He paid the judgment due for our sins. We are able to walk out of the prison of sin as free men and women with our RISEN Savior. We can go to God with Jesus to ask His forgiveness and begin a new life with God. Justice has been satisfied through Jesus.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Are You Seeking Heaven... Or God?

So is everyone going to heaven now? Although our cell doors are unlocked, many still sit in a prison of sin, satisfied with religion or their own beliefs or unbelief. Some may think that they've lived a good life and deserve to go to heaven, others may believe that this life is all that there is. Still others may have been taught that "heaven" is achieved through living (or dying) in some religious way. But God's word says that He has provided the one way for all who are seeking Him. Only those who by faith humbly accept the death of Jesus in their place can come to God with our risen Savior for His forgiveness. Only through Jesus can we be reconciled with God.

[Jesus said...] "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him; and through him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens, having made peace through the blood of his cross. You, being in past times alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and blameless before him, if it is so that you continue in the faith. (Colossians 1:19-23)

No one is worthy to come to God based on their own good works. A prisoner on death row can't be forgiven and released by doing virtuous deeds. Justice must be satisfied. Jesus took my judgment. I can come to God with Jesus for

forgiveness, not because I am worthy, but because he tells his Father that he died for me. Only Jesus could take my place since he had no sins of his own to die for. I can stand before God with Jesus—in his righteousness.

... not having a righteousness of my own, that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. (Philippians 3:9)

For him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

God gave us Freedom to Choose...

By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

God is a God of love. Love requires the freedom to choose. God is looking for those who are seeking Him. He opened the way for a relationship through Jesus. We can enjoy a growing friendship with God right now, even before we go to be with Him in heaven. Jesus opened the way to come to God for forgiveness and reconciliation (to be made spiritually alive—unseparated from God)... but we have to choose to go.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

WWJD-- What would Jesus do if he were still here in the world? He'd be telling people about his Father, God. Jesus came into this world so that we could do the same. When God is involved in your daily life, there's a lot to talk about.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Yahweh, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Something to think about:

The serpent said to the woman, "You won't surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate; and she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:4-6)

Even in paradise discontentment can arise. Satan is called the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), using worldly wisdom and its desirable attractions to get us to question God—and why we shouldn't have what we're seeing.

God gave Adam the freedom to choose... and He's given us a choice. Who are you trusting? Where is it taking you?

20. Bible Verse Page Index

1 Corinthians 1:9	55	1 John 5:9-12	68
1 Corinthians 1:10	21	1 John 5:20	27
1 Corinthians 1:24	7, 17	1 Peter 1:1-2	55
1 Corinthians 1:30-31	56	1 Peter 1:13-16	12, 53
1 Corinthians 2:9	Introduction	1 Peter 1:20-21	8
1 Corinthians 2:11	59	1 Peter 1:23	18
1 Corinthians 6:11	58	1 Peter 2:1-3	18
1 Corinthians 6:19-20	58	1 Peter 2:9	53
1 Corinthians 8:2-3	34	1 Peter 2:11-12	30
1 Corinthians 10:1-4	17	1 Peter 2:20-24	30
1 Corinthians 10:13	30	1 Peter 2:22	1
1 Corinthians 11:23-26	62	1 Peter 4:1-2	30
1 Corinthians 13:4-7	35	1 Peter 4:12-19	30
1 Corinthians 13:12	59	1 Peter 5:5-7	29
1 Corinthians 15:1-3	57	1 Peter 5:8-10	30
1 Corinthians 15:3-4	49	1 Samuel 9:15-16	52
1 Corinthians 15:7	33	1 Samuel 16:1-13	52
1 Corinthians 15:21-22	25	1 Thessalonians 4:7-8	58
1 Corinthians 15:24-28	66	1 Thessalonians 4:16-17	58, 64
1 Corinthians 15:25-26	57	1 Thessalonians 5:9	64
1 Corinthians 15:26	58	1 Timothy 2:5	22, 25
1 Corinthians 15:27	25	1 Timothy 2:6	56
1 Corinthians 15:45-49	25	1 Timothy 4:1	64
1 Corinthians 15:51-52	58, 64	2 Corinthians 1:21-22	53, 56
1 Corinthians 15:54-57	58	2 Corinthians 4:3-4	Introduction
1 John 2:1-2	62	2 Corinthians 4:4	39
1 John 2:2	56	2 Corinthians 4:6	1, 55
1 John 2:22	24	2 Corinthians 5:10	65
1 John 2:27	59	2 Corinthians 5:16-17	25
1 John 2:28	66	2 Corinthians 5:17	13
1 John 3:1	26	2 Corinthians 5:19	11, 18
1 John 3:2	12	2 Corinthians 5:20-21	50, 59
1 John 3:5	11	2 Corinthians 5:21	56, 73
1 John 3:8	8, 50	2 Corinthians 6:17-18	53
1 John 3:10	53	2 Corinthians 11:3-4	Back Cover
1 John 3:17-18	35	2 Corinthians 12:2	7
1 John 4:7-8	35	2 Corinthians 13:14	55
1 John 4:9	73	2 John 1:7	24
1 John 4:10	56	2 Peter 1:3-4	15
1 John 4:15	20	2 Peter 1:17	29
1 John 4:20	35	2 Peter 1:17-18	20
1 John 5:5	20	2 Peter 1:19-21	2

2 Peter 2:20	16	Acts 15:1-21	33
2 Peter 3:3-4	66	Acts 17:24-27	69
2 Peter 3:8-9	66	Acts 17:30-31	66
2 Samuel 7:12-16	44	Colossians 1:12-14	45
2 Samuel 7:14	8, 53	Colossians 1:13-14	12, 57
2 Thessalonians 2:1-4	64	Colossians 1:15	11, 29
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14	9, 52	Colossians 1:15-17	8
2 Timothy 1:9	9	Colossians 1:19-20	11, 15
2 Timothy 3:12	39	Colossians 1:19-23	72
2 Timothy 4:1	65	Colossians 2:6-10	16
Acts 1:3	65	Colossians 2:9	11, 15
Acts 1:6-7	65	Colossians 2:13-14	45
Acts 1:7	29	Daniel 7:13-14	23, 57
Acts 1:8	59, 68	Daniel 9:25	52
Acts 1:8-9	61	Deuteronomy 6:5	34
Acts 1:9	33	Deuteronomy 7:6-8	43
Acts 1:9-11	63	Deuteronomy 10:22	43
Acts 1:14	33	Deuteronomy 11:16	39
Acts 2:21	56	Deuteronomy 18:18-19	44
Acts 2:22	5, 47	Deuteronomy 30:14	41
Acts 2:36	6	Ephesians 1:3	27
Acts 3:6-8	6	Ephesians 1:3-5	9, 55
Acts 3:13-15	49	Ephesians 1:7	56
Acts 3:17-18	49	Ephesians 1:13-14	16, 30, 58
Acts 3:22-23	44	Ephesians 1:20-21	5, 57
Acts 4:12	6, 56	Ephesians 2:8	49
Acts 4:25-26	52	Ephesians 2:8-9	16
Acts 4:27-28	51	Ephesians 2:11-18	2
Acts 5:29-32	59	Ephesians 2:19-22	44
Acts 7:29-30	3	Ephesians 3:14-19	15
Acts 7:30-38	17	Ephesians 3:19	15
Acts 7:55-56	24	Ephesians 3:20-21	16
Acts 9:19-20	20	Ephesians 5:1	29
Acts 10:25-26	39	Exodus 3:1-6	17
Acts 10:38	5, 47, 51	Exodus 3:13-15	3
Acts 10:40-41	49	Exodus 3:15	21
Acts 10:42	65	Exodus 6:2-3	3
Acts 10:43	6	Exodus 12:40	43
Acts 12:2	33	Exodus 19:3-8	2
Acts 12:17	33	Exodus 23:20-23	17
Acts 13:27-30	45	Exodus 40:9-15	52
Acts 13:30	57	Ezekiel 2:1	24
Acts 13:38	12	Ezekiel 36:26-27	35

Ezekiel 37:24-28	1, 65	Hebrews 4:15	62
Galatians 1:10	29	Hebrews 5:5-6	44
Galatians 1:19	33	Hebrews 5:8	28, 30
Galatians 2:20	16	Hebrews 7:25	25, 58
Galatians 3:24	2	Hebrews 9:11-15	2, 45
Galatians 3:26	21, 27	Hebrews 9:27	50
Galatians 4:4	8	Hebrews 10:4-7	24
Galatians 4:4-5	21, 45	Hebrews 10:10	24
Galatians 4:5	27	Hebrews 10:31	63
Galatians 4:6	58	Hebrews 10:35-38	66
Galatians 5:1	61	Hebrews 11:3	7, 17
Galatians 5:13	61	Hebrews 11:6	69
Galatians 5:22-23	13	Hebrews 12:5-6	30
Genesis 1:1	7, 9	Hebrews 12:7-8	30
Genesis 1:3	9	Isaiah 7:14	11
Genesis 1:4-5	9	Isaiah 9:6-7	44, 48
Genesis 1:27	10, 11	Isaiah 9:7	50
Genesis 2:15-17	43	Isaiah 11:1	44
Genesis 2:16-17	71	Isaiah 11:1-2	32
Genesis 3:1-34	43	Isaiah 42:8	3
Genesis 3:4-6	73	Isaiah 45:1, 4	51
Genesis 3:15	43	Isaiah 46:5-7	54
Genesis 3:16-19	71	Isaiah 52:11	53
Genesis 3:17	66	Isaiah 53:1	50
Genesis 3:23	71	Isaiah 53:3-6	48
Genesis 12:1-3	43	Isaiah 53:6	56
Genesis 15:13	43	Isaiah 54:13	55, 67
Genesis 15:18	43	Isaiah 55:6	69
Genesis 32:28	3	Isaiah 56:7	39
Genesis 37:6-8	31	Isaiah 61:1-2	47, 51, 52
Habakkuk 2:3-4	66	Isaiah 63:9	17
Hebrews 1:1-2	7, 18	Isaiah 64:4	Introduction
Hebrews 1:3	11	James 2:17	38
Hebrews 1:4-5	8, 17	James 3:2	17
Hebrews 1:6	40	James 3:8-10	17
Hebrews 1:8-9	40, 52	James 4:6-8	62
Hebrews 2:3-4	68	Jeremiah 7:11	39
Hebrews 2:6-9	25	Jeremiah 9:24	56
Hebrews 2:14-15	24,50,56,61	Jeremiah 29:11	73
Hebrews 2:17, 18	25, 30, 45	Joel 2:32	56, 57
Hebrews 3:1-2	6	John 1:1-3	7, 17
Hebrews 4:12-13	8, 18	John 1:12	6
Hebrews 4:14-15	12	John 1:12-13	12, 30

John 1:14	7, 15, 18	John 10:33-36	40
John 1:17	2	John 10:36	52
John 1:18	17	John 10:38	19
John 1:33-34	19, 32	John 11:5	37
John 2:1-11	33	John 11:25	70
John 3:5-7	35	John 11:32-36	37
John 3:16	49	John 11:40	38
John 3:17	41	John 12:24-26	16
John 3:18	27	John 12:29	5
John 3:36	63	John 12:34	23
John 4:7-30	15	John 12:45	19
John 4:13-14	14	John 12:48	18, 69
John 4:25-26	16, 51	John 12:49	45
John 5:18	27	John 13:35	35
John 5:22-23	40, 65	John 14:1-3	61
John 5:24	12, 18, 49	John 14:3	60
John 5:26-27	5	John 14:6	22,27,69,70,72
John 5:39	67	John 14:10	18
John 5:43	4	John 14:16-17	58
John 6:14	45	John 14:21	67
John 6:36	70	John 14:26	57
John 6:38	47	John 14:27	49
John 6:41-42	33	John 14:28	29
John 6:44-45	55, 67	John 14:31	28
John 6:46	27	John 15:1-2	16
John 7:3-5	31	John 15:5	70
John 7:5	33	John 15:5-6	16
John 7:16-17	49	John 15:18	39
John 7:25-27	51	John 15:26	67
John 7:37-39	15	John 16:7-8	58, 61
John 8:12	70	John 16:23-24	6
John 8:17-18	68	John 16:28	61
John 8:19	19, 29	John 17:3	27, 34
John 8:28	23	John 17:6-8	48
John 8:29	29, 34, 47	John 17:17	Introduction
John 8:42	47	John 17:20-21	48
John 8:44	53	John 17:20-23	21
John 10:7-9	70	John 17:24	8
John 10:10	16	John 17:25-26	29
John 10:11	70	John 18:33-36	47
John 10:14	70	John 18:36	57
John 10:22-36	19	John 19:7	20
John 10:30	19, 21	John 19:25-27	33

John 20:17	27	Luke 27:54	20
John 20:27-28	40	Mark 1:22	4
John 20:30-31	5, 20, 51	Mark 3:4-6	38
Leviticus 11:44-45	12, 53	Mark 3:20-21	33
Leviticus 19:18	34	Mark 6:1-4	32
Luke 1:27	44	Mark 6:3	1
Luke 1:30-31	8	Mark 8:31	23
Luke 1:30-32	31	Mark 10:17-23	37
Luke 1:30-33	45	Mark 10:45	23
Luke 1:34-35	31	Mark 11:27-28	4
Luke 1:35	19, 27	Mark 13:11	68
Luke 1:36	32	Mark 13:14	64
Luke 2:40	31	Mark 13:32	29
Luke 2:44-50	31	Matthew 1:1-16	32
Luke 2:51-52	32	Matthew 1:21	3
Luke 3:3	32	Matthew 1:23	11
Luke 3:21-23	32, 47	Matthew 3:16-17	55
Luke 3:23-31	32	Matthew 4:10	39
Luke 4:1-2	47	Matthew 5:43-44	39
Luke 4:1-13	62	Matthew 6:9	4, 27
Luke 4:3	20	Matthew 6:24	37
Luke 4:14-15	47	Matthew 6:30	37
Luke 4:18-19	51, 52	Matthew 6:31-33	38
Luke 4:20-21	47	Matthew 7:11	38
Luke 4:36	4	Matthew 7:13-14	41
Luke 4:41	20	Matthew 8:2	39
Luke 4:43	45	Matthew 8:8-10	4
Luke 6:12-13	28	Matthew 8:29	20
Luke 7:20-22	48	Matthew 9:6-8	4, 5
Luke 9:20	56	Matthew 10:19-20	59
Luke 9:23-25	16	Matthew 10:34-37	34
Luke 10:21	55	Matthew 11:28	12, 73
Luke 11:2	66	Matthew 11:29	70
Luke 12:40	23	Matthew 12:32	23
Luke 18:1	28	Matthew 12:34-35	17
Luke 18:8	28	Matthew 12:46-50	33
Luke 19:45-46	39	Matthew 12:48-50	34
Luke 21:36	23	Matthew 12:50	30
Luke 22:19-22	62	Matthew 13:55	1, 33
Luke 22:29	57	Matthew 14:14-16	38
Luke 22:41-42	28	Matthew 14:33	39
Luke 22:70	20	Matthew 16:13-17	1
Luke 24:27	67	Matthew 16:27	23, 65

Matthew 21:9	4	Psalms 89:19-20	52
Matthew 22:37-40	34	Psalms 107:8-9	15
Matthew 23:27	12	Psalms 118:26	4
Matthew 24:29-31	64	Psalms 139:23-24	62
Matthew 24:42-44	64	Revelation 1:13	24
Matthew 27:43	20	Revelation 3:11-12	41
Matthew 27:46	28	Revelation 3:20	46
Matthew 28:18-19	5	Revelation 8:1-2	64
Matthew 28:19	59	Revelation 10:7	64
Micah 5:2	8	Revelation 11:15	64
Numbers 12:8	17	Revelation 12:1-9	43
Philippians 2:2	21	Revelation 12:10-11	68
Philippians 2:5-7	11	Revelation 13:16-18	64
Philippians 2:6-7	17	Revelation 14:14	24
Philippians 2:8	28	Revelation 14:14-16	64
Philippians 2:8-10	5, 40	Revelation 16:1-21	64
Philippians 2:9-11	28	Revelation 19:11-16	65
Philippians 2:14-15	53	Revelation 19:11-21	50
Philippians 3:9	73	Revelation 20:1-6	50
Philippians 3:20-21	12, 25	Revelation 20:2	43
Philippians 4:6-7	49	Revelation 20:11-15	50, 58
Philippians 4:13	16	Revelation 21:1-4	66
Proverbs 3:5-6	36	Revelation 22:3	66
Proverbs 3:11-12	30	Revelation 22:8-9	39
Proverbs 3:34	29, 62	Romans 1:18-20	68
Proverbs 8:22-31	7	Romans 3:23	11
Proverbs 8:32-36	8	Romans 3:24	56, 72
Proverbs 9:10	29	Romans 5:1-2	49
Psalms 2:1-2	52	Romans 5:5	35
Psalms 2:7	8	Romans 5:6-8	45
Psalms 8:3-6	25	Romans 5:8-9	63
Psalms 8:6	66	Romans 5:12	56, 71
Psalms 9:10	69	Romans 5:18	45
Psalms 14:2	69	Romans 5:19	43
Psalms 18:31	4	Romans 6:14	61
Psalms 34:8	18	Romans 6:23	45, 56, 72
Psalms 45:6-7	40, 52	Romans 8:14-17	30, 57
Psalms 49:15	56	Romans 8:15	50
Psalms 51:1-4	13	Romans 8:23	58
Psalms 56:11	39, 50	Romans 8:28	73
Psalms 82:1-7	40	Romans 8:29	12
Psalms 82:6	19	Romans 8:34	58, 62
Psalms 83:18	4	Romans 10:8-9	41

Romans 10:13	56	Titus 3:5	58
Romans 12:2	29	Zechariah 6:12-13	44
Romans 13:1	6		
Romans 15:5-6	29		
Romans 15:30	55		

Another Jesus

whom we did not preach...

The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, "I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach..." (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

After almost 2000 years, how many ideas about Jesus that are not mentioned in the Bible have been preached and carried on by tradition? How have these ideas become walls which have separated us into different denominations and religions, or even kept someone from God?

Let God introduce you to His Son through the things that He has told us about Jesus. His Word can bring us back to the simplicity that is in Christ. It is there that we'll find all that God has given us, and wants for us, through Jesus.

This is not Another Jesus book.